

The Identity of Influencers on Social Media

Punrapha Praditpong

Student, Doctor of Communication Arts Program in Communication, College of Communication Arts,
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
E-Mail: s61584946008@ssru.ac.th

Krisana Chueachainat

Lecturer, College of Communication Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
E-Mail: krisana.ch@ssru.ac.th

ABSTRACT

Presently, the presentation of content by influencers through various media can be found in many ways. Including social media that has become more popular. Therefore, influencers are divided into different categories according to the content presented and also divided the level of influential into 5 levels by using the number of followers as a determinant such as; nano, micro, mid-tier, macro and mega. In addition, the expression of an influencers 's identity through social media consists of physical expression, these include; gestures, speech, actions, communication skills and the expression of feelings, thoughts, attitudes and values. Including the knowledge, experience and expertise in content creating for credibility to the target group into Facebook, YouTube or Instagram. However, the identity of the presentation will be consistent with the content category according from the aptitude. This is the identity of influencers that is clearly expressed.

Keyword - Identity, Influencers, social media

INTRODUCTION

Communication technology is a part of our routine that responded the needs of searching and searching any information. Communicating was used by various social networks; information exchanging, news receiving, shopping, entertainment in a smartphone application. General people will take advantage of technology to use online networks in searching for stories they interested. From the Thailand Internet User Behavior 2020 Survey (ETDA, 2021) found social media such as Facebook, Line, Instagram are the most popular activities. Therefore, it is the way for influencers who choose to present their stories via Facebook, YouTube, Instagram as well. For usual most of Influencers are people in the social circle or the industry that they are involved in their story presented. They must have specialized knowledge and expertise.

The growing popularity of influencers are arising from the changing behavior of consumers in information reading. Information providing is in the form of an influencer experience. Product reviews are easily accessible the consumer's confidence. Result of a study from Wisersight reveals that 63% of brands choose to increase their influencers marketing budgets and estimated by 2020, global influencer marketing will be worth Up to \$10 billion (Infoquest, 2020). Influencers are categorized by the number of followers or engagement on the influencer platform. Based on the division by Casting Asia Company Limited, an influencer marketing solution provider can be divided into 5 types of influencers according up to the number of followers: 1. Top Star influencer with more than 1,000,000 followers, 2. Macro influencers with 100,000 – 1,000,000 followers, 3. Micro influencers with 10,000 – 100,000 followers, 4. Nano influencers with 1000 – 10,000 followers and 5. End user influencer with 100 – 10,000 followers. The content is presented differently, which is measured by the number of followers. Necessary qualities that make influencers with high numbers of likes, engagement and followers. They will be had successful delivery contents and the ability to maintain their leading influencers skill which is considered a content or transmits information to their target audience. In the past, there has been a ranking of influencers in Thailand by Tellscore organizer has held an award ceremony for the best of influencers in digital channels. Objective of this organized is create good content creation norms and express constructive opinions, creative thinking, have the power to communicate and have a sense of society for the communication and advertising industry. In the name of “Thailand Influencer awards”.

Every Influencers are divided according from the content presented into 22 categories: 1) Beauty & Fashion 2) Food 3) Health & Sports 4) Lifestyle 5) Motorsport 6) Tech, Gadget & eSports 7) Parenting 8) Financial & Investment 9) Silver 10) Change Makers 11) Citizen Reporter 12) Storytelling 13) Experience 14) Charismatic 15) Multi-Tribe 16) Brand Love 17) Rising Star on Facebook 18) Rising Star on Instagram 19) Rising Star on Twitter 20) Rising Star on YouTube 21) Rising Star on TikTok and 22) Community. The winner will be selected from content presenters via social media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.

The content presenting of the influencers in each field will be different according to the aptitude or identity of the individual person who wants to present it through various channels. That presented to their target audience by letters, images or video files.

OBJECTIVE

To study the communication identities of the influencers

LITERATURE & THEORY

1. The concept of identity

Meaning

“Identity” when separating in Pali words as Atta + Character, "Atta" means one's self, own, “Character” refers to a unique features. The meaning of overview is collectively identity. This can refer to the characteristics of a person, society, community or country. Sometime it will refer to external features such as dress and any behavior. Furthermore, language, literature, traditions and culture are represented to identity of the community or society. (Apinya Fuengfusakul, 2003)

“Identity” according from the English-Thai dictionary is the property of a person or thing and it has further implications that are specific qualities of a person or thing that makes something stand out or different from others. (Apinya Fuengfusakul, 2003)

Kathryn Woodward (1997 in Apinya Fuengfusakul, 2003) said: Identity is something makes us aware of who we are and how we relate with others person as well as the world around us. How we live? Identity is something sets the way for us. It indicates who is the same as us and who is different from us. Most of the identity is defined by the difference which will be seen in the form of separation, such as identity in the form of differences between races or conflicts of belief, etc. Most of the identity is built up in the form of opposite things, such as whites and blacks, normal and deviation from normal and men and women.

In addition, Yurachat Boonsanit (2013:65) said: Identity is something characterizes a person, which is a part of the external self-characteristic, such as gestures, language and expressions towards with other people. And the internal self-characteristic, including feelings, thinking, habits, ideology, beliefs and the spiritual anchor. Identity is a word what used to convey the identity of a person and it is an indicator of the individual characteristics of a person, society, community, such as ethnicity, language, local culture and religion, etc. Which have difference characteristics from society or other people.

In summary, the meaning of the identity is property or characteristics that indicate the individuality. That expressed from the external and internal, such as expression of physical and expression of thought.

Personal identity and social identity

Identity is not something you were born with but something that is built by society later and definition of “Who we are” is possible when we interact or communicate with other people. For this reason, one side of identity is the interaction that we feel belonging to others (self-ascription) and in the other side, other people must feel the same way as us (ascription by others). (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2019)

Apinya Fuengfusakul (2003) referred to Kathryn Woodward (1997) as there are two types of identity: Personal Identity and Social Identity for study the overlap and interaction of these two levels. Personality does not refer to the response with external stimulus but it refers the respond of readiness or trend. While Erick Erickson who is the psychologist sees the formation of identity is a lifelong process and people can change their main characteristics. Ericsson chose to use the word “identity” instead of the word “personality” and even influenced from Freud, he chose to emphasize the role of Ego rather than the role of consciousness, and he had the implications of stressing individual freedom for chosen. The individual of a person will response for the choices

of life and the pattern of identity that chooses by own. It can integrate from multiple identities into a single identity. If it fails and identity crisis happened. Identity crisis is a symptom that cannot find oneself, can't knowing for sure what your own. This symptom is not confident in own abilities and do not know how to place oneself in relation to others. The next step is the choice between the self-isolating personality results in an equilibrium identity development, have an integrated personality, have a good relationship with their own past and who can't find their identity or have a broken identity, they feel that life is hopeless and they can't be fixed anything anymore.

Self-categorization theory (SCT, Turner, 1987) presented the difference between personal identity and social identity as a cognitive tool that helps researchers understand the changes from individual perception and behaviors to the groups. On the other hand, personal identity is identified as the basis of an important psychological of each phenomenon. That is patterns of perception and behavior. There are variations of individuals characterized, while social identity is identified as the basis of collective or group psychological phenomena. That is patterns of cognition and behavior what are the same with each person.

European social psychologists often use the word "Social identity" for refer to the identity that people acquired by their membership in a social group while the word "Personal identity" is often reserved for defining themselves as unique individuals. (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner et al., 1987; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992, p.302 referred in Simon, 2004)

Sociologist - Erving Goffman divided identities into two categories (referred in Tuangtong Soraprasert, 2016) such as:

1. Personal identity is an individual's image in the eyes of others as a unique individual. Society has different ways for identified personal identity. In addition, Little John and Foss explained that personal identity is a unique personality arises from self-perception and arises from learning by interactions with family members in an early life.

2. Social identity of a person is the social status such as occupation, class, sex, ethnicity or religion which the individual belongs with. Society will have expectations or demands with how individuals of that age, gender, or class should behave.

From the concept of identity that mentioned above, Permprayoon, N. (2019) studied creative communication for creating personal identity via Facebook Fanpage. It was found that the key factor in this case study was identity factor. From the Lowcostcosplay page, the identity of Khun Ancha, the owner of this page resulted from growing up with a dysfunctional family and Japanese cosplay culture influenced. As this result, that leads him to meet the development of a creative process in the cosplay expression and the communication according from the Japanese media culture that he enjoyed in childhood. Diary tootsies page, the identity of Mr. Cha, the owner of the page being from his Homosexuality gender and the pressure from growing up in a Chinese family culture. As this result, that leads him to creative motivations and needs to be accepted by his family and society. And Bie The Ska page, the identity of Bie, the page owner being from his ethnicity, birthplace, behavior and physical characteristics. With the independent parenting and featured wanting, they have an effect to personal identity expressing in term of laughter creating and fun in the form of parody contents. In these three case studies received positive feedback for their communications and received social recognition on both social media and offline social media through evidence of success. From the measure of the growth of the fan page that has more followers, gaining reputation and working with famous brands, etc. In addition, the reflection of personal identity through a written. In case study of Mr. Wikrom Kromadit, found that Mr. Wikrom Kromadit's identity had a correlation between personal identity and social identity. It presented a flow identity transform to 6 forms of identity communication: 1) Leaders of leading business organizations, 2) Experts in social and economic problems analyzing, 3) Cooperation between international relations Represent, 4) Being a good person to give back to society, 5) Being a role model for people in society and 6) Traveler for search of new experiences. Presented through book radio and television media: Amata and Caravanning Foundation (Kittiwattanachot, S. 2014)

2. The concept of influencers

Meaning

The Cambridge Dictionary defines "Influencers" is a person who influences or changes the actions or behavior of people.

De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V. and Hudders, L. (2016). Defined that is Someone who has built a large network or followers who is regarded as a reliable provider of information on one channel or more channels.

Morteo (2017) Defined that is a person with expertise in a topic who creates content and presents objectively ideas to the audience. Then it becomes a word-of-mouth communication that can referred and reliable.

Jin, S.V., Muqaddam, A. and Ryu, E. (2019) Defined that is a person who has a large number of followers who contribute the assist in a promotion of product or brand.

Influencermarketinghub (2021) Defined that is someone who has the power to influence the purchasing decisions of others because of knowledge, position or relationship between them and their recipients.

In conclusion, an influencer is a person who has expertise in content creating. They can present objectively and reliably objects and they have a lot of followers.

In categorizing influencers to explain and classify the types of influencers that appear nowadays. Morteo (2017) reviewed the structural classification of influencers and combined their attributes. Therefore 8 different types are identified: 1) Opinion leader, 2) expert, 3) Consumers, 4) Social media luminary, 5) Celebrities, 6) Trendsetters, 7) Blogger and 8) potential influencer. The criteria for this classification are determined by the origin of influence, main source of influence, the number of followers and their engagement on each post. This categorization allows them to differentiate between various profiles that according from this following table.

Table 1
Classification of influencer's profiles

Profile Criteria	Opinion leader	Expert	Consumer	Social Media Luminary	Celebrities	Trendsetters	Blogger	Potential influencer
Origin of influence	Profession	Profession	Profession	Personal interest	Personal interest	Personal interest	Personal interest	Personal interest
Main source of influence	Reputation	Organizational position	Experience	Content quality	Personality	First-hand knowledge	Unbiased opinion	Trust
Number of followers	10,000- 1 million	10,000- 1 million	500-10,000	More than 1 million	More than 1 million	10,000- 1 million	10,000- 1 million	500-10,000
Engagement per post	5% - 25%	5% - 25%	25% - 50%	2% - 5%	2% - 5%	5% - 25%	5% - 25%	25% - 50%
Examples	Activists Analysts Journalists Networkers Thought leaders	Businessman CEO Executives Insiders	Advocates Employees Fans Users	Instagrammer Social Media mavens Viners Youtuber	Actors Athletes	Platform-specific sensations Rockstars Beauty and fashion	Blog writer	Sharer Summertime player

Source: Morteo (2017)

Category of influencers

Quan, T.-T., Mai, D.-T. and Tran, T.-D. (2020) studied in the classification of social media influencers. They did it by collects the activities data from influencer's posted, comments, number of friends and number of followers, from Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media, a total of 10 media. They found the twenty-five main classifications and subcategories: Travel, Fashion, Lifestyle, Music, Technology, Social Political, Food and Drink, Entertainment, Family, Nutrition, Health, Business Economy, Parenting (Being Mom/Dad), Beauty, Sports, Photography, Movie, Kids, Humor/Comedy), Education, Entrepreneur, Fitness, Gaming, Journalism and Pets.

level of influencer

Influencers appearing on various social media channels such as; Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and other platforms. They will be a leader in various fields in each category such as; fashion, beauty, entertainment or technology. These influencers are knowledgeable in their field. Whether it means business, food, finance or gaming. Influencers are people who influence the thinking and decisions of the target group. They stimulate their target audience to be aware, interested, and followed by divided influencers into levels. With the measuring by the number of followers, unique members or visitors in social media accounts or blogs. These tiers are a convenient way for

marketers to understand what they expect from influencers at different levels (Izea, 2020). They are divided into 5 levels:

1) Nano Influencers: For this level. They will have between 1,000 and 10,000 followers. For creators with 1,000 followers, they typically have an 8 percent of Like engagement rate on their posts but the top influencers with 10 million followers have a 1.6 percent engagement rate for likes. These new-born influencers build closer relationships with their audience members by responding to opinions in a more meaningful and interactive way with individual person. As a result, the recommendations they provide related to content or branding. The target more feel likes the product coming from trusted friends. This way will leads to more brand loyalty. More users share content with friends and increase sales. Nano influencers are often niche and categorical as well.

2) Micro-Influencers, For this level, the number of followers is between 10,000 and 50,000. They will have known for their specialization and higher engagement rates. The Association of National Advertisers reported that 92 percent of consumers said they trust nano-influencers recommendations over traditional ads or celebrity endorsements, and 82 percent are more likely to buy the products what certified by micro influencers.

3) Mid-Tier Influencers: This group of influencers has more experience than micro-influencers and has between 50,000 and 500,000 followers. They are the little known represent but they have more powerful and more popular. Mid-tier influencers still keep maintain with the higher engagement rates. Their followers are a mix of niche intensity with more general ones.

4) Macro-Influencers: This group of influencers has between 500,000 and 1 million followers, this group is the agglomeration of an ever-growing influential creators who are real celebrities and other well-known personalities. According from Recode's research, macro-influencers have the highest ROI of all influencers but cause of the large number of followers, macro-influencers are unable to maintain consistently high engagement rates like their lower-tier counterparts. Influencers at this level are professionals who tend to pay photographers, videographer Editors or possibly representatives to assist their content. Therefore, their rates are naturally higher.

5) Mega-Influencers: For this group, they will have more than 1 million of followers. which is a very spacious reach. This group can be famous people such as singers, actors. These people are often attracted by the brand. because they can reach a group of people of various ages.

From above, it can be seen that person are aware with the influence of strategies that influencers use it with their audiences under complex environments for make themselves to be successful. From this situation have also been studied by Campbell and Kirmani (2000) they found that Influencers are able to identify and develop feelings of doubt depending on whether "Can they determine their influence's motives?" Represents in their interactions with them in their experiments, they specify the one of the key factors will be determining a person may be under persuasion efforts. Is that the person is actively engaging with potential influential represent or merely the audience in such interactions? A peculiarity that supported the power behind the most influencers is the weight of produced opinions when the person sharing that information who experimented it (Uzunoglu & Misci, 2014). In addition of the overall influencer levels by the number of followers. Influencer levels can also be measured in different platforms.

Mengtian Jiang (2018) commented: Highly credible influencers appear to generate stronger consumer perceptions of image, love, and helping motives. They are less likely to face consumer resistance to their messages than less credible influencers. They are regardless of product categories or disclosure. Furthermore, findings revealed that different thoughts about influencer motives led to varying levels of resistance. Specifically, money and selling motives together, as well as image motives increased consumer resistance towards to sponsored content; while love, sharing and helping motives altogether reduced consumer resistance to persuasion. That consistent with 5 main characteristics that lead to reputation and leadership of opinion on social media platforms such as: credibility, storytelling, content quality, suitability platform, authenticity and an attractive image and regularly presented. Al-Emadi, F.A. and Ben Yahia, I. (2020). Consistent with Ryu, EA and Han, E. (2021), the social media influencer reputation scale consists of 4 distinct dimensions such as: communication skills, influence, credibility and expertise. The Influencers in online world have presented through social media in various forms such as: images, articles or video clips. They used a simple language that is easy to understand. In the term of content creating, they must have the knowledge, expertise and direct experience for every subjects. Present information with honestly. There are both of advantages and disadvantages for decisions making of the followers (Rataya Mahasamut). (2015)

3. The concept of social networking

Another tool for building relationships between individual's person and entities is: Social Networking. Started from websites Classmates.com (1995) and SixDegrees.com (1997), which are websites that are restricted working only for students in the same school. It used for create profiles, information, communicate, send messages and exchange mutual interested information between friends who are in the list only. Later, websites Epinions.com (1999) was developed by Jonathan Bishop, adding new part for users can control their content and they can connect everyone not only with their friends on the list. It can be regarded these as the beginning of all social network sites in nowadays such as: My Space, Google and Facebook, etc.

Classification of social networks

Classification of social networks: In fact, it is difficult to clearly differentiate different types of social networking sites because each website is constantly innovating and developing to please the users. They has many functions but every websites have different strengths selling point for their own. as follows: (Thitima Thongthap, 2008 referred in Wimonphan Arphavet et al., 2011)

- 1) Publishing type is blog and content type website.
- 2) Community type, a social network that helps and build a network for old friends and make new friends, can send messages to exchange interested things with each other.
- 3) Media type is intended to present videos, movies.
- 4) Games type, online games that can create the represents in the virtual world, live in the online world. Communicate and do activities together with other people.
- 5) Photo Management type, an online photo storage website that helps to manage photos from digital cameras and also share images or you can open the image for sale.
- 6) Business/Commerce type, the social networking website for trading, make a business and auction online.
- 7) Data/ Knowledge type, the collective knowledge source website.

With the unique of each network online. Influencers can choose to use networks online to build effective and appropriate relationships with their stakeholders or target audience for create awareness, understanding of sustainable communication.

CONCLUSION

Expression of identities or unique qualities of influencers who are able to communicate by physically and express their thoughts through various online media such as: writing articles, Facebook pages, video expressions. individual behavior. The identity expressed clearly reflects what the person is. The Influencers will be received trust and credibility in the content that they presented through the established channels. According to each influencer's aptitude of the content in different fields. By the presentation, there will presented with slides, text or video that derived from their knowledge, experience and opinions.

In addition, their information presented also have an important for making of followers or consumers decision. This is a result from incentivizing making with followers to conform the information from influencers. It is clearly concluded that the identity of an influencer consists of communication skills with gestures, the ability to tell stories, maintaining quality content, building credibility and expertise in own content. From the Thailand Influencer awards 2020 announcement in November 2020, the best influencer award in the Health category is the Fit Junctions page, this page is a resource for fitness knowledge and maintain health. The highlight of this page is they presented how to diet with no need to starve for eat delicious food, don't overdo to exercise and they emphasis on teaching with knowledge that is easy to understand but based on science. Next the Best Foodie Influencer category is Plaocooking, a cooking tutorial page with no gibberish. They have only listening to music while cooking. This presented us to watch cooking content without getting bored. We will watch only kitchenware, various ingredient used in cooking with every step of the preparation and the atmosphere of music plays along. easy-to-access presentation with Thai and English subtitles make it easier for people to understand. More over the Best Financial & Investment Influencer award is Longtunman page, this page was created with the intention of sharing the fun things. They presented easy business case studies to understand in both of Thailand and abroad. It's not just only for investors who should follow but It's suitable for all people who are interested in business. The style of this page is like a friend talking to a friend. The influencers trying to find stories to share with friends. Let their friends read and understand what's going on each day. (Tellscore, 2021).

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